



Lead Organization: Metropolitan Planning Council's Regional Employer Assisted Housing (REACH) Program

Program start: July 1, 2011

Target: Employers

Credit Enhancement:

Matching grants/forgivable loans

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) connects the dots — between regional needs, challenges, and solutions, and among the individuals and organizations with the power and capacity to guide the growth of the ever-changing Chicago metropolitan region. At MPC, work is done in three phases: policy development, policy promotion, and policy implementation. Policy development is done through the use of models tested in communities around the region. Policy promotion is done through education and advocacy with policymakers at all levels of government. Policy implementation is done through the practical application of MPC-designed tools communities can use. Because policy change requires time and persistence, MPC often deploys all three of these strategies during the life cycle of an individual project, in different sequences and intensities.

About: One particularly innovative piece of the Energy Impact Illinois (EI2) financing component consists of employer-assisted housing retrofits. This pilot's key goal is to strengthen the financial stability for interested employees of participating employers by lowering housing and home energy costs and providing education counseling on these activities. EI2 is doing this by leveraging its program with the Metropolitan Planning Council's existing Regional Employer Assisted Collaboration for Housing (REACH) program.

Scope of Services: EI2 will provide a retrofit incentive (up to \$3,000 per unit) to each employee participating in the program, which will in turn, leverage additional retrofit dollars through an employer match (also up to \$3,000) from participating REACH providers. This program will enable current and future REACH Illinois employers – i.e., employers providing housing counseling and down payment assistance/closing costs to their employees -- to be a vehicle for energy retrofits dollars. Employers will also be able to take advantage of tax credits for enrolling participants under 80% of area median income. Through the employer-assisted retrofit program pilot, EI2 will retrofit up to 15 homes and provide a model for utilizing employers as a focal piece for promoting energy efficiency.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Increased uptake of retrofit activities through co-delivery with the REACH program up to 15 participants
- Increased awareness – employers and housing counseling agencies as members
- Increased housing counseling agency capacity for assisting residents with retrofit activities and resources
- Average utility bill reduction of 30 percent per unit